



EMERGENCY NEWS FROM THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

State Emergency Operations Center
Camp Murray, Washington

For immediate release

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Okanogan County wildfire prompts State Fire Mobilization

CAMP MURRAY -- State fire assistance was mobilized late Wednesday afternoon, July 16, to support local firefighters battling a wildfire on the west side of the community of Okanogan.

Early reports put the fire's size at 150 acres and gave varying numbers of structures destroyed by the blaze, possibly in downtown Okanogan itself. At least 30 structures were reported threatened.

The State Fire Services Mobilization Plan was authorized at 4:58 p.m. Wednesday by Maj. Gen. Timothy J. Lowenberg, director of the Washington Military Department. The plan is implemented to provide personnel, equipment and other resources from around the state when wildfires exceed the firefighting capacity of local jurisdictions.

County and state officials are concerned by extremely high fire conditions all around Washington state. A number of fires in and around Okanogan County over past weeks already have stretched local resources.

The State Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at Camp Murray has activated to support the Fire Mobilization effort. It is being staffed by personnel from the Washington State Patrol's Fire Protection Bureau and the Emergency Management Division of the Washington Military Department.

The Fire Protection Bureau, which coordinates the dispatch of resources to support local fire fights, reports firefighters and equipment are en route to Okanogan County from Wenatchee and the Tri-Cities area.

The State Enhanced 911 Office in cooperation with local telephone carriers reminds all citizens in the affected area to:

- Stay off the telephone unless you have a critical need to make a telephone call. Remember a FAX or a computer also uses a telephone line and its use may affect your ability to get immediate help in a life-threatening emergency.
- DO NOT call 9-1-1 unless you need an emergency response from police, fire or emergency medical personnel.
- If you experience other types of problems not related to these emergency services, call the appropriate telephone number for those services.
- DO NOT call 9-1-1 unnecessarily—it must be kept open for people who have a true emergency.
- If you pick up your telephone to make a call and do not hear dial tone, DO NOT HANG UP. Simply wait a few seconds, and you will get dial tone and be able to make your call.

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